

Friday

December 10, 1962

Dear Pierre:

I have just read the TIME piece which worried the President, and have written John Steele the attached letter trying to correct those of his misinterpretations and misstatements about which I have any personal knowledge.

Let me also say that the remark in the LIFE magazine story by Steele implying that I was dissatisfied with the first statement that you and the President released, on Monday of last week, and felt it "cavalier" is quite wrong. I believe I told you and the President that I was satisfied with the statement, and I have so stated publicly repeatedly. I believe that the feeling that it was cavalier and insufficient emerged from the newspapermen and their interpretation, which evidently Steele shared.

Cordially yours,

Adlai E. Stevenson

Mr. Pierre E. G. Salinger,
Press Secretary to the President,
The White House.

Steele
John

December 10, 1962

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. John Steele
TIME Magazine
1000 Vermont Avenue N.W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear John:

I have just read the advance sheets of your piece in TIME, and take the liberty of mentioning a few items, because I am sure you want to have all of this straight in your own mind for future reference. And, incidentally, I hope this is an end of the matter, because if it is prolonged it can't help anyone, myself included, and more and more talk could diminish my effectiveness in my job. I am sure that's the last thing you have in mind.

First, let me say that the statement that my relationship with the President has "long been uneasy" is not correct. As I told you, it has been not only comfortable, but more and more so as time has gone on and the Administration's channels of communication have clarified and the opportunities for conversation with the President increased.

I also must point out that, after asking Senator Kennedy to nominate me in 1956, I am sure he never expected that the reward would be my backing for the Vice Presidential nomination. On the contrary, if I am not mistaken, I explained to him at the time the situation that had resulted from Estes Kefauver's withdrawal in my favor and the violent pressure from his delegates to choose him, therefore, as my running mate. I don't believe that Senator Kennedy at that time had any feeling that he had been maltreated or had been "forced to fight for the nomination." Actually, as you will recall, I did not designate Senator Kefauver, but threw the

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Adlai-E. Stevenson Papers

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Vice Presidential nomination open for selection by the Convention, to give Senator Kennedy a chance as a very attractive alternative to Nixon, and to let the Convention operate in the way it was intended to operate historically. I have always felt that he was most grateful for this opportunity, in view of the fact that his gallant fight for the nomination attracted widespread national attention and paved the way for his successful campaign in 1960.

There is also a phrase that I "agonized" over the decision not to nominate Senator Kennedy in Los Angeles. The fact is that I had long previously told both him and Lyndon Johnson that I would remain neutral and would not seek any delegates for myself or to "stop" anyone. Good faith, therefore, precluded any possibility of nominating him at Los Angeles, and I said so, not after agonizing, but at once.

There is also a statement that I hesitated about accepting the United Nations job. I did, for the express and, I believe, announced reason that I could not accept the appointment until I found out who was to be Secretary of State, in view of the fact that he had spoken to me prior to his appointment of a Secretary of State. Obviously, no one can work in this position who doesn't have a satisfactory relationship with the Secretary of State. Incidentally, it has been widely reported in the last week (not in TIME) that I told the President I would not serve as our Representative to the United Nations if McGeorge Bundy was Secretary of State. For your information, and for future reference, this is not true. So far as I can recall, his name was never mentioned, nor could I have commented on him, in view of the fact that I didn't even know him. The President-elect did discuss with me other possibilities for Secretary of State, and I gave him my candid opinion on each of them.

There is also a statement in the piece that I seriously considered running against Dirksen, with the implication that I was dissatisfied with my job at the United Nations. I must tell you that I never considered running against Dirksen at any time, and so stated when the possibility was first brought to my attention. I felt the United Nations assignment was more consistent with my interests and talents, if any. It was not until later, when Mayor Daley of Chicago pressed me to consider

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the nomination and also spoke to the President, that I mentioned it to him, and he made the emphatic recommendation, that you reported accurately, against it and urged me to stay at the United Nations.

Finally, there is a statement that I "talked tough" at the United Nations on instructions telephoned me by President Kennedy, in the confrontation with Ambassador Zorin on October 25th. It is unimportant at this stage, but I am sure you will appreciate that what I said and when I said it had to be determined here on the spot at the Security Council table.

I am aware that it has been widely reported that I was not satisfied by the first statement put out by the White House, but, as I believe I told you as well as others, I saw and approved this statement before it was issued. I think you will recall that the feeling that the statement was "cavalier" was advanced by the press at the time it was issued, not by me.

I am sure you won't misunderstand my anxiety to remove any ambiguities and errors. I hope, too, that you will have some opportunity to come up here and see this operation at first hand from time to time. My first interest is, as you know, not only to do my job well, but also to expand the area of understanding of the United Nations and the opportunities and difficulties it presents.

Yours,

Adlai E. Stevenson

P.S. While this is a personal letter, I would like to suggest that you compose a fact memo from it for TIME's files, so that the above points will be clear in any future references.

AES/re

cc: Mr. Pierre Salinger
The White House

cc: Mr. Clayton Fritchey